

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Every Metro Area Added Nonfarm Jobs in March!

The Louisiana Department of Labor, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), continues to closely monitor the economic impact of the recent hurricanes on the business and household surveys in the affected parishes. In producing the post-hurricane estimates, BLS announced that a number of modifications were made to standard estimating procedures to better reflect the employment part of the civilian labor force estimates. For a detailed explanation of the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on all of the BLS program's methodology, please go to <http://stats.bls.gov/katrina/cpscesquestions.htm>.

BATON ROUGE – All of the metropolitan statistical areas experienced strong over-the-month nonfarm job growth with the New Orleans area leading the way with a gain of 5,100 workers in March. The growth in jobs gave the statewide unadjusted nonfarm estimate a 14,500 employment gain over the month.

“This is definitely a positive sign for Louisiana,” said Secretary of Labor John Warner Smith. “The rebuilding in south Louisiana is having a positive ripple effect across the state. Some businesses are expanding and many employers impacted by last year's hurricanes are getting back on their feet. Job prospects are great in our state for anyone wanting to work,” stated Smith.

The state's unemployment rate for March 2006 increased slightly to 4.8 percent, up from the February 2006 unemployment rate of 4.3 percent, but was still below the year ago rate of 5.3 percent.

According to estimates, the state's civilian labor force in March 2006 was 1,871,974, down from 1,892,099 in February. The total number of employed in March decreased to 1,782,722, from 1,809,815 in February. Louisiana's number of unemployed for March was 89,252, a slight increase from 82,284 for the previous month. Nationally, the unemployment rate was 4.7 percent in March 2006, down from 4.8 percent for the February rate, but below 5.1 percent for March last year.

Unadjusted unemployment rates compare parishes and metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) to the state. The March 2006 unadjusted unemployment rate for Louisiana was 4.4 percent, up from the February 2006 rate of 4.2 percent. The unemployment rates for the MSAs were: Alexandria, 3.5 percent, up from 3.2 percent in February; Baton Rouge, 4.0 up from 3.8; Houma, 3.3, up from 3.1; Lafayette, 3.1, up from 2.8; Lake Charles, 3.4, up from 3.2; Monroe, 3.8, up from 3.5; New Orleans, 6.1, up from 5.9; and Shreveport-Bossier City, 3.7, up from 3.4 percent last month. Three parishes tied for the lowest unemployment rate at 2.9 percent, they were Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, and Lafourche. East Carroll Parish had the highest unemployment rate with 9.3 percent for March.

Preliminary seasonally adjusted statewide total nonfarm employment for March 2006 was 1,765,000 compared to 1,760,000 for the revised February 2006 figure, for an increase of 5,000 workers. The sector breakdown was as follows: natural resources and mining, 46,900 employed in March, up from 46,800 employed in February; construction, 106,000, up from 103,900; manufacturing, 143,600, down from 144,500; trade, transportation, and utilities, 364,400, up from 362,400; information, 28,400, down from 28,700; financial activities, 94,500, up from 94,200; professional and business services, 167,100, up from 163,400; educational and health services, 212,800, down from 213,100; leisure and hospitality, 171,100, down from 172,200; other services, 58,400, unchanged; and government, 371,800, down from 372,400 for the revised February figure.

For more detailed information on the March 2006 employment data for Louisiana, visit our Web site at <http://www.LAWORKS.net>, scroll over the tab at the top of the page for Labor Market Information, click on Publications & Reports, and select LMI Bulletin.

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Area	March 2006			February 2006			March 2005		
	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
UNITED STATES	142,772,000	7,255,000	4.8	141,994,000	7,692,000	5.1	139,759,000	7,986,000	5.4
LOUISIANA	1,771,828	81,880	4.4	1,781,372	77,592	4.2	1,971,355	106,022	5.1
ALEXANDRIA MSA	64,567	2,319	3.5	65,116	2,160	3.2	62,544	3,349	5.1
Grant	8,031	289	3.5	8,100	257	3.1	7,780	453	5.5
Rapides	56,536	2,030	3.5	57,016	1,903	3.2	54,764	2,896	5.0
BATON ROUGE MSA	338,502	14,115	4.0	342,774	13,601	3.8	335,308	17,957	5.1
Ascension	41,692	1,586	3.7	42,218	1,524	3.5	41,298	2,049	4.7
East Baton Rouge	200,834	8,461	4.0	203,369	8,204	3.9	198,939	10,176	4.9
East Feliciana	7,773	340	4.2	7,871	316	3.9	7,700	489	6.0
Iberville	11,636	732	5.9	11,783	653	5.3	11,527	960	7.7
Livingston	49,061	1,674	3.3	49,681	1,547	3.0	48,598	2,360	4.6
Pointe Coupee	9,200	431	4.5	9,316	437	4.5	9,113	705	7.2
St. Helena	3,814	281	6.9	3,862	313	7.5	3,778	308	7.5
West Baton Rouge	9,937	396	3.8	10,062	384	3.7	9,843	631	6.0
West Feliciana	4,554	215	4.5	4,612	224	4.6	4,511	279	5.8
HOUMA-BAYOU CANE-THIBODAUX MSA	88,160	3,041	3.3	88,323	2,832	3.1	89,551	4,165	4.4
Lafourche	41,832	1,255	2.9	41,909	1,210	2.8	42,492	1,856	4.2
Terrebonne	46,328	1,786	3.7	46,414	1,622	3.4	47,059	2,309	4.7
LAFAYETTE MSA	119,257	3,767	3.1	120,322	3,510	2.8	119,061	4,981	4.0
Lafayette	97,909	2,972	2.9	98,783	2,809	2.8	97,748	3,870	3.8
St. Martin	21,348	795	3.6	21,539	701	3.2	21,313	1,111	5.0
LAKE CHARLES MSA	88,195	3,094	3.4	88,825	2,948	3.2	88,410	4,570	4.9
Calcasieu	83,942	2,933	3.4	84,541	2,803	3.2	84,146	4,361	4.9
Cameron	4,253	161	3.6	4,284	145	3.3	4,264	209	4.7
MONROE MSA	76,657	3,062	3.8	77,353	2,768	3.5	78,185	4,466	5.4
Ouachita	67,005	2,659	3.8	67,613	2,395	3.4	68,340	3,844	5.3
Union	9,652	403	4.0	9,740	373	3.7	9,845	622	5.9
NEW ORLEANS-METAIRIE-KENNER MSA	401,382	26,197	6.1	404,299	25,170	5.9	598,151	28,199	4.5
Jefferson	Household sample data were not available.						220,673	9,578	4.2
New Orleans City/Orleans							190,715	10,863	5.4
Plaquemines							11,245	532	4.5
St. Bernard							29,798	1,497	4.8
St. Charles							23,475	1,050	4.3
St. John Baptist							19,728	1,061	5.1
St. Tammany							102,516	3,617	3.4
SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER CITY MSA	168,796	6,505	3.7	171,087	5,948	3.4	168,666	9,500	5.3
Bossier	47,958	1,563	3.2	48,609	1,456	2.9	47,921	2,325	4.6
Caddo	110,285	4,493	3.9	111,782	4,094	3.5	110,200	6,485	5.6
De Soto	10,553	449	4.1	10,696	398	3.6	10,545	691	6.1

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

Area	March 2006			February 2006			March 2005		
	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
NON-MSA PARISHES									
Acadia (Crowley) ¹	23,541	824	3.4	22,807	743	3.2	23,273	1,242	5.1
Allen	7,814	368	4.5	7,859	353	4.3	7,881	624	7.3
Assumption (Pierre Part) ¹	8,959	488	5.2	9,064	475	5.0	9,085	800	8.1
Avoyelles	14,711	680	4.4	14,568	650	4.3	14,515	1,012	6.5
Beauregard (DeRidder) ¹	12,913	499	3.7	13,076	460	3.4	13,169	758	5.4
Bienville	5,718	263	4.4	5,748	235	3.9	5,742	426	6.9
Caldwell	3,925	171	4.2	3,880	152	3.8	3,896	321	7.6
Catahoula	3,807	215	5.3	3,743	218	5.5	3,671	308	7.7
Claiborne	6,364	261	3.9	6,381	235	3.6	6,405	400	5.9
Concordia (Natchez, MS-LA) ¹	6,558	478	6.8	6,515	486	6.9	6,552	694	9.6
East Carroll	2,487	256	9.3	2,448	257	9.5	2,390	392	14.1
Evangeline	11,219	481	4.1	11,002	430	3.8	11,167	684	5.8
Franklin	7,028	451	6.0	6,872	469	6.4	6,929	677	8.9
Iberia (New Iberia) ¹	29,468	1,184	3.9	28,848	1,093	3.7	29,961	1,773	5.6
Jackson (Ruston) ¹	6,010	245	3.9	5,971	222	3.6	6,083	355	5.5
Jefferson Davis (Jennings) ¹	13,452	404	2.9	13,304	380	2.8	13,336	628	4.5
La Salle	5,449	176	3.1	5,376	161	2.9	5,450	283	4.9
Lincoln (Ruston) ¹	17,234	721	4.0	17,122	670	3.8	17,442	991	5.4
Madison (Tallulah) ¹	4,197	275	6.1	4,172	251	5.7	4,150	417	9.1
Morehouse ¹	10,580	669	5.9	10,383	618	5.6	10,640	1,038	8.9
Natchitoches (Natchitoches) ¹	16,452	684	4.0	16,415	644	3.8	16,508	941	5.4
Red River	2,958	171	5.5	2,985	160	5.1	2,995	289	8.8
Richland	7,805	404	4.9	7,731	395	4.9	7,753	658	7.8
Sabine	8,799	295	3.2	8,702	289	3.2	8,705	532	5.8
St. James	7,596	475	5.9	7,635	483	5.9	8,253	692	7.7
St. Landry (Opelousas, Eunice) ¹	34,033	1,452	4.1	33,721	1,335	3.8	34,048	1,984	5.5
St. Mary (Morgan City) ¹	19,743	1,080	5.2	19,725	1,016	4.9	20,044	1,793	8.2
Tangipahoa (Hammond) ¹	43,069	2,295	5.1	43,198	2,202	4.9	46,047	2,564	5.3
Tensas	1,927	187	8.8	1,910	199	9.4	1,840	214	10.4
Vermilion (Abbeville) ¹	21,421	836	3.8	21,217	751	3.4	21,543	1,215	5.3
Vernon (Fort Port South) ¹	19,611	734	3.6	19,650	660	3.2	19,634	1,019	4.9
Washington (Bogalusa) ¹	13,640	776	5.4	13,594	756	5.3	14,927	1,064	6.7
Webster (Minden) ¹	17,952	712	3.8	18,029	663	3.5	17,915	1,143	6.0
West Carroll	4,093	316	7.2	3,873	320	7.6	3,882	556	12.5
Winn	5,781	251	4.2	5,749	225	3.8	5,651	349	5.8

¹In addition to the eight (8) Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in Louisiana, there are seventeen (17) Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MCs): Jackson and Lincoln Parishes combine to constitute the Ruston MC area. Civilian Labor Force can be derived by adding employed and unemployed. For related information or data, please visit:

www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm.